

Mastitis During Breastfeeding

Mastitis is a breast infection. It begins suddenly and if not treated, gets worse quickly. Germs may enter through a break in the skin or through the nipple. Once treatment starts, the mother usually feels better in a day or two. The milk will not harm the baby and breastfeeding can continue. The mother usually has:

- Flu like symptoms—fever of 100.8 degrees or more, chills, body aches.
- A painful, hot, reddened breast

WHAT TO DO:

- ◆ Call the doctor and describe the symptoms.
- ◆ Keep the breasts soft by continuing to nurse 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. Add gentle massage to help the breasts empty.
- ◆ Antibiotics may be needed—take all of the prescription, even after starting to feel better. Most antibiotics are safe to use while breastfeeding.
- ◆ Wrap the breast with a wet, very warm towel or cloth; or soak the breast in a basin of very warm water. Repeat several times a day until the redness is gone.
- ◆ Drink more fluids to replace what's lost with a fever.
- ◆ Get more rest and nap when the baby naps.
- ◆ Ask your doctor if you can use medication such as ibuprofen to reduce swelling.

MORE INFORMATION:

Contact the doctor if the symptoms haven't gone away after finishing the antibiotic.

TO AVOID MASTITIS:

- ▶ Don't allow the breasts to become overly full. Try not to miss or put off a feeding. Talk to a breastfeeding counselor about ways to manage if you are making more milk than the baby can take.
- ▶ Treat sore nipples quickly.
- ▶ Avoid tight bras or clothing that binds.

For more information call:



Adapted from the
Arkansas Department of
Health WIC Program.